

be drowning in our own surpluses. Market prices will fall further, and Government payments will go up. That is the net essence of this bill. I hate to say that. I wish that were not the case.

I have supported agriculture bills in the past, unlike some of our colleagues in this Chamber. I would like to support an agriculture bill this year. Unfortunately, I see this bill as taking a giant step in the wrong direction, a direction where people will not be farming, due to what the demand or the marketplace is dictating, but, frankly, a marketplace dictated by Government, Government subsidies, Government largesse, and, ultimately, Government control. This Senator believes that is a mistake.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. NICKLES. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. NICKLES. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four and one-half minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. On this side. How much time on the other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I think all has been said that needs to be said, at least for today, on this farm bill. I guess we are going to have 6 more hours of saying it all over again tomorrow. So I see no need to stay here any longer.

I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time is yielded back.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for a period not to exceed 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE EDUCATION BUDGET

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Iowa for yielding the time. This is extremely important legislation. As one who from time to time manages floor legislation, I recognize that it is important to keep the focus and attention on the pending subject matter.

But I want to take a moment of the Senate's time to talk about another issue which is important to the families in this country; that is, our education budget.

I take this moment now because we have had a series of actions by the administration in recent days that brought new focus and attention on the issue of education funding.

Money, in and of itself, is not going to answer the problems we are facing in this country on any public policy issues, and it will not in the area of education. But what we had last year was an education reform program that was worked on by Republicans and Democrats alike, the No Child Left Behind Act. Prior to passage of the new law, there was criticism of the federal education programs, that they were not resulting in the children developing academic skills and succeeding in our school systems across this country, and there was also a very fundamental understanding; and that is, while money alone will not solve the problem, reform alone will not solve the problem. If you bring reform together with resources, you are going to fulfill a recipe for progress for children in this country.

The reforms, which we spelled out in the new law, are raise standards for students and teachers and hold schools and school districts accountable for results. It requires a great deal from the students, a great deal from the schools, a great deal from the parents, a great deal from the local communities, additional responsibilities by the States. We in Washington told them that we were going to be a partner in this endeavor to try to really make a difference in enhancing academic achievement.

That was an endeavor on which many of us signed off. Many of us, who have been here for a period of time, have raised some serious questions about the seriousness with which our Republican friends are really committed to the areas of education and education reform. I remember, after we saw Republican leadership take over in the Senate, as a result of the elections of 1994, one of the first actions they undertook was a rescission of some \$1.7 billion in education funding that had already been appropriated for some of the neediest children in this country. We fought that. We fought it and fought it, but they had some success in rescinding funding. It was the same year the Republican leadership announced they wanted to abolish the Department of Education.

I think most of us in this body wanted the Department of Education, for

one simple and fundamental reason; that is, every time the President brings a Cabinet together, we want to have someone at that table who is the clear, powerful voice for children and enhanced education and investing in the children of this country and their education. That is what the a Secretary of Education should do. But they wanted to abolish the Department of Education. They said we could have many other Departments, and money in other areas of public policy. But we resisted, and we saw that the Department was not abolished.

Then, if you can believe, in 1995, in the Republican budget resolution that came over from the House, they tried to effectively eliminate over \$18 billion in student loans support over a 7-year period. We were able to resist that, just as we resisted Republican efforts in 1981, when President Reagan initiated what they call an origination fee on student loans, an additional kind of payout. We were able to reduce that in a significant way. But students still pay too much up front to borrow money to go to college.

This is the record over a very considerable period of time. Three years ago, we had the battle on the floor of the Senate on elementary education, and there was a move to eliminate and support for 800,000 homeless children, 800,000 migrant children, 800,000 immigrant children who were going to be American citizens. The Republican leadership did not want any coverage for them.

The American people have a certain hesitancy and a certain concern about the legitimacy of the other side's real interest in investing in education. The list of anti-education proposals from the other side continues to go on.

Just ten days ago, we saw the proposal by one of the leading authorities in the administration, Budget Director Mitch Daniels, who suggested a new way to shortchange students pursuing their college education in this country, by effectively denying them the opportunity to go for the lowest-interest rates on student loans that long have been available to them. The Administration sought to require that students pay higher interest rates on their loans, rates which would mean, for the average student, more than \$3,000 in additional expenses over the life of their loan. If that loan was \$17,000, and repayment were stretched over 30 years, it would be an additional \$10,000 in costs.

That is a very clear indication of how the Administration views support for higher education for students in this country.

Now, we find that the President is out traveling across the country talking about the importance of funding education, understanding that we need reform and that we also need resources. Just yesterday, this is what the President said in Michigan:

The Federal Government has responsibilities. Generally, that responsibility is to